(c) the total number of students who are living in those hostels, State-wise and district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), 9613 New Primary Schools and 10875 New Upper Primary Schools have been sanctioned in 121 districts with substantial minority population during 2006-07 —2009-10 for the minority boys and girls.

(b) Ministry of Minority Affairs has undertaken Multi-sectoral Development Programme for the minority concentration districts *w.e.f.* 2008-09. Under this programme, construction of hostels has been approved in principle. However, formal sanction will take some time.

(c) In view of (b) above, it does not arise.

Training to SC/ST students for higher studies

982. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is giving any training to students who want to pursue higher studies especially for the categories like SC/ST free-of-cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof especially in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years compared to other States, State-wise; and

(c) the funds released and spent during the last three years especially in Andhra Pradesh compared to other States, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) According to the information supplied by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the following schemes form components of the Merged Schemes in the Eleventh Plan for which block grants are provided by UGC to universities and colleges:—

(i) Scheme for establishment of Remedial Coaching classes at undergraduate and postgraduate level for students from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from the non-creamy layer and Minorities.

(ii) Coaching classes for entry into services for SCs, STs, OBCs (Non-creamy layer) and Minorities.

(iii) Coaching for preparation of the National Eligibility Test (NET) for SCs, STs, OBCs (Non-creamy layer) and Minorities.

In addition to the above schemes, UGC is also providing assistance to students directly for pursuit of higher studies through scholarships and fellowships, namely (i) Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC candidates for pursuing M. Phil/Ph.D, funds for which are provided by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, (ii) Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for ST

candidates for pursuing M.Phil/Ph.D., funds for which are provided by Ministry of Tribal Affairs (iii) Post-Doctoral Fellowship for SC or ST candidates for pursuing Post-Doctoral Research in their respective thrust areas, (iv) postgraduate Scholarship for professional courses for SC or ST Candidates for pursuing their postgraduate in professional Courses. However it may be stated that these schemes are scholarship schemes and do not envisage free of cost education for the beneficiary students.

(b) and (c) As the UGC has been unable to provide the required information on the details of students benefitted and the funds released State-wise in respect of the Schemes for the benefit of the SCs and STs, the information will be collected and laid separately on the Table of the House.

Policy to achieve Millennium Development Goal

983. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need to have a forward looking policy to improve the nature, quality and access to education to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of education for all by 2015;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made so far in this direction especially in Andhra Pradesh for the people like muslim minorities, SCs, STs, and OBCs; and

(d) the funds released in this direction so far to achieve the MDG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) It is the constant endeavour of the Government to improve access, enrolment, equity and quality of education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen, through various initiatives, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid Day Meal Scheme and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was enacted in August, 2009 to provide for free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years.

(c) The achievements in elementary education are indicated below:—

Indicator	2001-02	2006-07
1	2	3
Gross Enrolment Ratio (classes I-VIII)	82.4	96.92
Dropout Rate (class I-VIII)	54.6	46.03
No. of out-of-school children (in crore)	3.20	0.45 (in 2008)
Gender Parity index (class I-VIII)	0.81	0.92